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REPORTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUBSIDIARY
BODIES: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Statement submitted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a
non-governmental organization in general consultative
status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

* E/1997/100.



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PROMOTING GREATER RESPECT AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENERAL AND IN PARTICULAR FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

*Excerpts from the resolution adopted without a vote by the 96th Inter-Parliamentary
Conference
(Beijing, 20 September 1996)*

The 96th Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Emphasizing the responsibility of all nations, in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, to promote and encourage respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religious belief or social position [.....],

Noting with satisfaction that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action reiterate that the right to development is a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of human rights [.....],

Underlining that the current world economic order is still unjust, and therefore hinders the realization of human rights [.....] and adversely affects women and children in particular,

Expressing deep concern about the deterioration of living conditions in developing countries [.....] and, in particular, about the harmful effects of economic hardship and a heavy foreign debt burden on the developing countries,

Recalling that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action emphasize that the human rights of women and children are an indispensable and inalienable part of universal human rights,

Recalling:

- The Declaration and Plan of Action on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children adopted at the World Summit for Children [.....]
- The commitments [.....] set out in the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development [.....]

/...

Recalling further the [.....] work of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995) [.....],

Conscious that while some countries have made tangible efforts to attain equality between men and women and achieved noticeable results, others have failed to make adequate efforts [.....],

Deeply concerned at the many forms of discrimination and violence against women and children [.....] requiring nations and the international community to take immediate and effective remedial measures [.....],

Aware that the number of economically exploited children has increased substantially over the last five years and that their working conditions have seriously deteriorated [.....],

Conscious that the causes of child labour are primarily rooted in poverty [.....],

Recognizing that people with disabilities, in particular children, face additional barriers to the equal enjoyment of human rights,

Reaffirming the principle set out in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action that efforts to solve the problems concerning children, in particular the girl child, should give priority to non-discrimination and the best interests of children, and take account of the opinions of children,

Welcoming the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women which emphasizes that violence against women constitutes infringement upon, hindrance to and denial of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women,

Noting with concern that there are many political prisoners and displaced persons as a result of terrorism and armed conflict in the world [.....],

Drawing attention in particular to the following texts adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Conferences:

- Resolution on the protection of the rights of children (1989),
 - Resolution on policies to put an end to violence against children and women (1991),
 - Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life (1994),
 - Resolution on parliamentary action for women's access to and participation in decision-making structures aimed at achieving true equality for women (1995),
 - Resolution on strategies for effective implementation of national and international commitments adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen (1995),
1. *Calls on* all governments to intensify their efforts to remove obstacles to the realization of human rights[.....], to strengthen international co-operation, to promote mutual understanding through dialogue and to promote and protect human rights on the basis of equality and mutual respect;

2. *Also calls on* all States to establish or [.....] to strengthen national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and to ensure that these institutions are independent of government [.....];
3. *Further calls on* all governments and UN bodies to strengthen their co-operation [.....];
4. *Urges* the governments of the industrialized countries to end cuts in official development assistance and instead to aim at the target set by the United Nations (from 0.7 percent to 1 percent of GNP), [.....];
5. *Calls on* all countries, UN bodies, the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to [.....] establish fair and just (trade) relations between all countries of the world;
6. *Emphasizes* the need for creditor countries to take effective measures to cancel or reduce the debt burden of developing countries and eventually solve their debt problems;
7. *Urges* all governments to promote the protection of the human rights of women and girls by taking effective measures to implement fully the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[.....], and all parliaments to follow up on the commitment they undertook in the Beijing Parliamentary Declaration [.....];
8. *Appeals* to countries which have not yet done so to accede to or ratify [.....] the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and *urges* the States parties to these instruments to take all necessary [.....] measures to implement the above Conventions effectively;
9. *Urges* all countries to formulate and implement their plans of action according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Declaration and Plan of Action on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children [.....];
10. *Calls on* parliaments and governments [.....] and the international community to take emergency measures to protect the rights of the child and particularly those of girls [.....];
11. *Strongly condemns* the conscription and recruitment of children in armed forces or armed groups [.....], as a violation of fundamental human rights requiring the punishment of those responsible for such heinous acts;
12. *Recommends* that parliaments and governments adopt and implement a programme setting out standards for the protection of women and children living in zones of national or international conflicts, of which they are the main victims [.....];
13. *Appeals* to all governments to use more effective measures [.....] to ensure that child prostitution and child pornography are consistently condemned and eliminated by society on a global scale [.....];

15. *Calls on* national parliaments, governments and the international community to initiate an open in-depth debate with a view to the adoption of measures that will tackle the root causes of child labour [.....];
16. *Urges* national parliaments and governments to ensure the provision of compulsory primary education and health care which are accessible to all [.....];
17. *Calls on* States to recognize the important and constructive role that non-governmental organizations can play and to support their efforts aimed at enhancing promotion and respect of human rights;
18. *Also calls on* States where appropriate to provide advisory and technical services [.....];
19. *Requests* the United Nations to consider the implications of trade-related sanctions with a view to addressing their negative impact on women and children;
20. *Rejects* any coercive or unilateral measures [.....], applied by one country against another, since such measures ultimately penalize men, women and children who are alien to political controversies and interests and should therefore be regarded as an infringement of human rights;
21. *Calls on* parliaments and governments worldwide to strongly condemn and combat drug production and trafficking and terrorism [.....];
22. *Also calls on* parliaments and governments to introduce programmes of positive action and education to ensure non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of human rights [.....];
24. *Strongly condemns* sexual violence including in armed conflicts, particularly the use of rape as an instrument of terror, forced prostitution and all other forms of sexual aggression, *recommends* that all parliaments and governments take emergency action to confront and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls; and *recommends* that the United Nations further extend the powers of the international tribunals to ensure that States and individuals are held accountable for such crimes;
25. *Calls on* States to exercise diligence to make sure that violence is not occurring in the home and schools and to stop invoking customs, traditions or religion to avoid their obligation to eliminate violence against women and children;
26. *Recommends* that all parliaments and governments provide constitutional guarantees, promulgate and implement proper laws to prohibit sexual discrimination against all women and girls of all ages [.....];
27. *Urges* governments to end forced sterilization of women and forced abortion, which in all cases constitute a grave violation of the woman's personal integrity and in some cases are also used for suppressing peoples and minorities;

28. *Requests* all countries to reflect the principle of equality between men and women in their legislation and take effective measures to guarantee the implementation of this principle;
29. *Also requests* the parliaments of all countries to:
 - Examine their national legislation, including customary law and legal practice [.....] to ensure that the principles governing international human rights instruments are implemented [.....];
 - Pursue efforts towards the establishment of family-friendly societies in order to promote the rights of members of the family, especially the rights of women and girl children in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 50/142 [.....];
30. *Urges* parliaments and governments to devise comprehensive human rights education programmes, enlisting the assistance of political circles [.....] as well as all the players in civil society [.....], and to ensure that such programmes are implemented as part of the education system and relayed to all areas of social life;
31. *Requests* all countries to implement education curricula which include programmes for eliminating ignorance of the law and to make use of the media, in order to help women to understand their rights and exercise them through the legal system;
32. *Appeals* to parliaments and governments to condemn, and to take all possible action to ban prostitution and pornography and to enact legislation prohibiting their dissemination through the media;
33. *Calls on* parliaments and governments to develop co-operation and the exchange of experience between women representatives from international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations [.....], in order to promote the rights of women in the family and society;
34. *Requests* all parliaments and governments to have translated into the native languages of their countries international legislation [.....] concerning human rights and especially the equality of the status and human rights of women, and to ensure the most extensive dissemination of this material in order to heighten women's awareness of their rights.